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A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. DR. PRICE.

By the AUTHOR of
The Defence of the American Congress,
IN REPLY TO
TAXATION no TYRANNY.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, No. 39, FLEET-STREET.

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A DEFENCE of the RESOLUTIONS of the AMERICAN CONGRESS, in Reply to *Taxation no Tyranny.*

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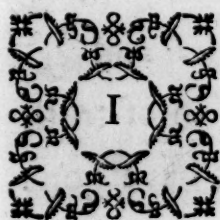
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TO THE

REV. DR. PRICE.

REVEREND SIR,



It is with the highest satisfaction I see you embarked in the noblest of all causes, freedom. which ought for ever to cement all parties, civil and religious, that deserve the name of Englishmen and protestants, in one common union of affection, interest, and defence. You have, to your great ho-

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nour,

nour, methodically stated, accurately explained, and ably defended, the *liberties*, and consequent *rights* of mankind in general, and your countrymen in particular.

It was worthy of you, both as a philosopher and divine, to take up this great argument, as it relates to the Colonies, upon a larger scale than that of human laws; which being the lucrative profession of a body of men under the influence of Government, are liable to be perverted to it's secret purposes; to be made the instrument of *fraud* and *tyranny*, rather than the Guardian of truth and liberty. But you might have gone farther, and have reasoned upon yet higher principles. you might have asserted, that without the liberty you have desired, in its several branches, Man could not have been the creature heaven intended

intended him to be; the fit subject of reasonable government in this world, or of retribution in the next. We can not indeed without a degree of absurdity predicate that of any being, with, or without which, he could not be that being. we can not, strictly speaking, reason any thing of a God, who is not just, or of a Man who is not free, because, without these qualities, they would be neither God nor Man, but nonentities, of which nothing could be affirmed or denied. It is therefore of little moment to observe that "without *physical liberty*, man would be a machine acted upon by mechanical springs, having no principle of motion in himself, or command over events; and, therefore, incapable of all merit and demerit;" when in fact he would not be, what he is, *a man*. and consequently this is really saying nothing about him, as such. All that this mode of rea-

soning can effect, is to involve error in gross and palpable absurdity. to shew the falshood of premises, from the folly of conclusions; and expose the nakedness of deductions which arise from false principles, and fallacious positions. Of this kind are the *Sovereignty* of God, as the ground of *election* and *reprobation*. and the *divine right* of jurisdiction in one man, or the *unlimited supremacy* of a body of men, over a community; which is the ground of Tyranny on one hand, and Slavery on the other. both which doctrines artfully, or erroneously consider man as being what he is not; a mechanical Being, to be only acted upon by an extraneous power; and not possessed of the self-determining, self-ruling powers of civil and moral liberty. whereas, on the contrary, from the equity of the divine nature and laws, we demonstrably conclude mankind to be both rational and

and free. as from the equality of their condition in a state of nature, we infer with equal certainty, that the notion of hereditary and indefesible right of Princes, or Parliaments is no less absurd and ridiculous. For, as it is the *office* in which the power resides, and not the officer; and all civil offices in the State are either immediately delegated, or inherited conditionally, and by compact with the people; it follows that these official powers can never lawfully act against, much less subvert those rights from which they are derived, and by which they subsist. the power delegating must ever remain superior to that delegated. as the fountain is always above the stream. nor, in the course of nature, can the stream revert upon, and bury its parent source. No more can a community of individuals possessing no power over each other, depute a power unlimited, over all. or
if

if driven, or seduced to such an act of political frenzy and suicide, it could not be binding upon *them, as men*, who had divested themselves of the character, by giving up the unalienable privileges of their nature. for we can no more, as men, be considered without civil or moral liberty, than as quadrupeds, and without the power of speech. It is reason, and moral freedom that make us men, more than the outward figure, and distinguish us most from the brute creation. It is liberty therefore, as you justly observe, that is the "first privilege and glory of Man's nature." his moral rectitude, which can only arise from his moral freedom, is the true image of his Maker. To this faint transcript of the Divine Perfection, in his heart, the laws of heaven appeal. and the self-governing power of the mind, assenting, and approving, gives them their sanction and obligation. The *will* of
Omnipotence

Omnipotence itself, guided by unerring wisdom, is *not our law*. It is our law, because it is *just* and *good*; and our reason and conscience can not but receive and own it as such. Could it be conceived otherwise, which it can not, it might punish or destroy us as creatures, it could not *bind* us as *reasonable* creatures. —What then shall we say of the arrogance of our *fellow-worms*, who claim *unlimited*, and *unquestionable* authority? who would make their *will* the absolute law of a Nation, to be binding and penal in *all cases*, for the *sole reason*, that it is their *will*? as if reason had no appeal from human power, and equity were less a law to man than to his Maker.—This is in reality, what the poets feigned, a GIANT REBELLION against HEAVEN. usurping higher prerogatives than the KING of KINGS.—It is *high-Treason* against the Majesty and the rights of
Human

Human nature; and challenges no less the flaming thunder-bolt, than the sword of vengeance. Contempt, abhorrence, and the *Broad Axe* be the portion of the Tyrants, who treat Nations as their property, and prey! and consider Mankind as made for Government, not Government for Mankind. who sacrifice to the *dignity* of Authority, those *from* whom, and *for* whom, the Authority was given, while utterly regardless of the dignity of justice and humanity. who, inflated with fullen pride and implacable revenge, levy the powers of the State *against* the *people*; and thus desperately plunging into the blood and guilt of Civil war, flatter themselves that the *honour* of a little, tricking, Tyrannical Government, will sanctify the foulest of all depredations and MURDERS.

I HAVE

I HAVE lately asserted on another occasion, that all lawful Government is compact. that violated compacts have no force or validity. that subjects unprotected, much more, outraged in their liberty or property, *owe no allegiance.* and owing no allegiance, they *can not* be in *rebellion.* Usurpation dissolves the ties of Government, and refers them back to nature, to prior and stronger claims of civil liberty, and property.

THESE are bold truths, urged in strong terms; such as the truths and the times require. Men are in general too indolent and dissipated to read. a short essay may catch the eye, as an amusement. An hundred pages even from Dr. PRICE, would have been an Herculean labour to curiosity itself, had he not judiciously addressed the *feelings*, as well as the understandings of the public. For in modern

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estimation,

estimation, what is *natural liberty*, but the liberty to follow nature, in the libertine sense of the word? what is *moral freedom*, but a right to *make free* with morals? or religious liberty, but the liberty of choosing whether we will have any religion at all? and as to civil liberty, we are grown too civil and polite a Nation, to think much of making a small compliment of it to Government. It is your *State of the National Debt* that has gained you readers; more, I fear, than your argument, however clear and conclusive. The horrors of civil war and impending slavery, have been lost in the more *interesting* dread of Public Bankruptcy. This has spread like an electrical stroke, and shocked not only the tremulous nerves of luxury and effeminacy, but the dull ear of folly, and the callous heart of avarice. Our brethren in America may bleed for Civil Liberty.—our
industrious

industrious poor at home may starve in the horrid conflict.—these calamities were neither seen, nor felt. for they reached not the card-table, the ball-room, nor the theatre, the gaming-house, the tavern, nor the turf. It is happy therefore, if alarmed by our *fears*, and our *interest*, the only arguments that touch us home, we should begin to enquire into the fatal cause of these public alarms, *the Lawless lust of Power in Government.* a Passion which our boundless *Paper wealth* has kindled into such a blaze of incontinence, as threatens, *horrendum dictu!* unnatural violation to our own offspring. And who can tell, if the Liberties of the Colonies must perish by the Parricidal hand of Britain, what security will remain at home, either for *our* liberty or property? But, unhappily for this *lost* country, the bulk of its corrupt inhabitants are only anxious about the latter. if

the former ever enters their thoughts, it is only to make the most of it as a marketable commodity, at the Levee of the Prime Agent in the infamous traffick.

AFTER thus paying you my warm tribute of approbation and thanks, you will pardon me, Sir, if I reluctantly remark upon one leading distinction in favour of the Americans, where you say, p. 99, "they are not *our subjects*, they are our *fellow subjects*." It appears to me that they are neither *one* nor the *other*, in the common meaning of the words. They are subjects of the State as far as their Charters bind them. They cannot be our fellow-subjects, because that is to be subject *alike*, in the same *manner* and *degree*, which it is evident they are not. Since, by the restrictions which their charters lay on their trade, they are *more* in subjection; by having their own distinct governments,

vernments, they are *less* in subjection to the Parent State; and therefore not our fellow-subjects. A charter, as I understand it, is a compact or agreement of mutual freedom and consent, mutual interest and obligation; where no *previous* right or claim cou'd bind on either side contrary to the terms and tenor of such compact.

THIS, by placing part of the subjects in a new relation to the State, becomes a *new Law* to them, as a Colony; and consequently *abrogates* the old, as not suited to their circumstances and situation. They can not therefore be considered at the same time in the general light of subjects, bound by the law of the land, and the particular one of colonists, bound by Charter Law. Nor can the Legislature bind those in *all cases* whatsoever, whom, by special contract, the State has invested with certain rights and immunities. Such a right
on

on one hand, and such privileges on the other, can not subsist together. It follows, therefore, either that the Legislature has, constitutionally, no such binding power, or else the charters of the Colonies are dishonest collusions, which having no mutual obligation upon a Government unlimitable, were from the first null and void.

It would be regarded as a most infamous piece of knavery, in private life, to settle an inheritance upon a youth in his minority for a valuable consideration paid by his Family, and when he came of age, to with-hold it on a prior claim, not mentioned, nor known to subsist. but if it should appear that this claim had really been fictitious, and *forged long after* the settlement, in order to defraud him both of that inheritance, and all that he possessed besides, we shou'd want words to
 express

express our indignation at so ensnaring and treacherous a piece of villainy. When the ancestors of the Colonists carried abroad with them their Charters, they imagined them to contain the native rights of Englishmen, as well as the grants and immunities of their new contracts. They certainly did not conceive they were going into a wilderness to be less free; much less that they had left their liberty and property behind them, in custody of Parliament, without even the form of a *Will* and *Power*, bequeathing such a solemn Trust.—From the time they migrated, and their Charter-Laws commenced under the faith of the Crown and nation, from that hour we had no political relation to them but as Colonies; and consequently no authority over them, but from those Compacts which established both the relation and the Authority. for it is mockery and insult in Government to make con-
tracts

tracts with Subjects, whom they can afterwards bind in *all* cases, or in *any* case contrary to the spirit and letter of such contracts. nor do I see, if such a power could belong to a delegated Government, to cut up the very roots from which it originated, why the super-omnipotence of it's supreme power shou'd descend so low, as to *treat* with the *slaves* whom it might have *compelled*, without terms and conditions, to become hewers of wood and drawers of water, and to render the produce of their labour into the Royal Coffers. This right of Government has been asserted in the fullest extent by the Creatures of it, both in, and out of Parliament. and the Executive Power is confirming it, by wantonly destroying the property with the persons of the Colonists. Dr. Johnson has compared them to the *Scythian Slaves* in their *Masters* houses. and the brutal instruments of revengeful devastation,

devastation, who fire their towns over the heads of women and children, seem to be of the same opinion. Our whole quarrel with these unhappy people is for presuming they were any thing more than the mere *Spunges* of the State. When they were comparatively poor and defenceless, we flattered them by *treaties* with the idea of rights, and property. it was politic *then* to amuse and deceive them, into such exertions of industry, as that idea could alone inspire. But when they were masters of real property, the case was widely different. *Meum* and *Tuum* became unnecessary and impertinent distinctions; since *their wealth*, as the learned Pensioner observes, became *our wealth*; and from that period, a Tory *Commonwealth* has commenced, which, tho' new to America, is not so to England. a similar institution has often taken place under the Supreme Power, on BAGSHOT HEATH,

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and

and EPPING FOREST.—The truth is, the Colonies were become objects of Ministerial envy and jealousy. they obstructed the progress of the *Stuart Plan*, and for that reason *only*, were to be *plundered* and *subdued*. we no longer deigned to *treat* with them upon *fresh terms*, suited to their growth and strength, as a wise and just Government wou'd have done; but we made a claim of a general right (contrary to all ideas of right) to *impose* what laws, terms, and conditions we pleased, and to *take any portion* of their property, Government thought fit, *without*, and *against* their *consent*. When we had previously resolved on this unrighteous quarrel, to obtain a right by *conquest* over the persons and property of our brethren, which neither Law nor justice gave us, it was easy to find or *make* a pretext. If they had *bled* freely in their property, in obedience to Parliament, we should have

thirsted

thirsted for no other *blood*. we should even have been tender of human life, because population and revenue would then have encreased together, and every head of the *tame Cattle* would have been so much *live Stock*, to feed and fatten the *Junto*, with all their Creatures in administration. But to suffer these people to *Live*, nay, daringly and presumptuously to encrease and multiply, in defiance of the Supreme Legislature; and worse than all, to claim a property in their wives, children, houses, and lands, (mere *Grants* from Government, and granted only to be resumed at pleasure) was an insult no longer to be endured. A greedy, canine Scotch Cabinet, with a rich morsel in their mouths, could not allow the shadow of property to the creators of the country and the commerce. They have therefore lost the substance, contrary to their usual practice, by catching at the shadow; and the future famine of

the Treasury, and its hungry dependents, will curse their rapacity and folly.

THAT the Public may have a just notion of the value and importance of the *sacrifice now making* to *Scotch Tyranny*, or, which is the same thing, Scotch policy, it would be a task worthy of Dr. Price's skill in Calculation, to estimate the perpetuity of the American Revenue to this State, rapidly as it was encreasing, and keeping pace with population. To me it appears that this revenue alone, duly applied to so important a purpose, wou'd have been sufficient in a small period of time to discharge the National Debt. And as it seems our Ministers can find the means, *without this resource*, to support the Credit of the Nation, and the revenue of the State, with a civil war at the same time, enormous in its expence, and boundless in its *waste*, I should conjecture very naturally,

naturally, that the *professed* object of the war, an encrease of Revenue, was far from being either just or necessary. since it appears, that these great *Financiers* might, with the same exertion of their talents, have *laid by* that whole revenue after the peace, or applied it to the fore-mentioned use, instead of wantonly embarking the *whole* strength and wealth of the Nation on one desperate enterprize of barren and lawless Power.

LET us not then flatter ourselves, and fall the dupes of our own credulity, by imagining that the *unity* of the Empire, the *supremacy* of Parliament, the *dignity* of Government, the improvement of the Revenue, much less the payment of the Public debt, or a concern for the welfare of the Nation, were singly, or united, the true ground of this fatal war. Let the avowed principles of the KING's *Friends*
and

and *Favourites*, and the uniform tenor of all the measures of his Reign, proclaim it. Let the expulsion and disgrace of the WHIGS, the Benefactors, the Creators of his Family, with the restoration and elevation of Jacobites and Tories, speak it to all hearts. Let the ministerial robbery, the judicial outlawry, and altering a Record; the Expulsion, and Imprisonment of Mr. Wilkes; the *instigated* attempts upon his life; the inhuman slaughter of his friends at St. George's fields and Brentford; the thanks, the pardons, the rewards, extended to the *State-Murderers*, thunder it in our ears,

LET an unfortunate Ch——r, too strongly tempted, duped, and ensnared, tho' dead, yet speak. And if to these glaring proofs, we add the Dispensing Power assumed in CANADA; Despotism and Popery established; and this vast region of
Tyranny

Tyranny extended to the doors of Englishmen, professedly to people the world with Slaves and Papists, rather than freemen and protestants; that the former might be the convenient, and ready instruments of Power and revenge against the latter; can any doubt remain of the principles and motives of these actions? If *any* can remain, let us turn our eyes from a scene of treachery and imposture, which the natives behold with indignation, to the ancient settlements of our Protestant Friends. what see we on this desolated Coast, but invasion, rapine, conflagration and slaughter? If we ask the reason of this riotous havoc and devastation of our Brethren, what is it but nobly asserting those unalienable rights of free-born subjects, without which we should blush to own the relation? what is it but their nobly refusing to acknowledge a greater power of Parliament over them, while under
distinct

distinct and ~~seperate~~ Governments, than it ever possessed, while under its immediate authority; or than it *dares* to assert over their countrymen at home?

LET these melancholy Facts be recollected, and calmly considered, and if we can hesitate to pronounce the *true object* of the war, with the principles and *designs* of the *Cabinet* that first provoked and now directs it, we are fitter than I flattered myself, for the *Condition* that awaits us.—There can be only *one Motive*, rash, revengeful, and bloody enough to encounter the impending dangers of this civil contest, and risk the fate of both countries, with FOREIGN INVASION, PUBLIC BANKRUPTCY, INSURRECTION and IMPEACHMENT horribly staring them in the Face. And that——look well to yourselves, my Countrymen! can be no other than inhuman and relentless—TYRANNY.

BUT

BUT I forget that I am addresssing
 Dr. Price, and not the Public. I shall
 finish this letter, intended merely for a
 News-paper Essay, with a *Speculation*
 upon *Paper-Money*, very different from
 your's, in hopes that *ridicule* may come
 seasonably in support of argument.



E

INSCRIPTION

INSCRIPTION

For a certain PUBLIC BUILDING,
Aptly representing a *group* of BUBBLES.

To be placed over the Door, in PAPER GILT.

—CREDE QUOD HABES, ET HABES.—

A

SPECULATION

O N

PAPER-WEALTH.

IN proportion as the minds of men
become debauched and enervated,
they are open to *delusion* of every kind.
Human nature perhaps could never form
a greater contrast than betwixt the *Old*
Roman Republic and the modern dealers
in

in Beads and Catgut who disgrace the same ground.

WHEN a Nation could be so far gulled by a Priesthood, as to believe a *Wafer* not only the *true Sign* of the human Body, but the Body itself actually existing in many different places at the same time, they became bankrupt in understanding. their juggling leaders had drawn upon them for the last mite of reason and common sense; and Transubstantiation remained in all the Catholic States, a badge of Spiritual Tyranny on one hand, and Slavery on the other, which infinitely surpassed all the Fable, Superstition, and Imposture of Pagan Rome.

LUCKILY, in Britain, we have shaken off this creed, and indeed most other religious creeds and prejudices. It is enough

for us to swallow the political transubstantiation of Civil property. but I think our infatuation falls little short of the Papists, when we can in good earnest believe the wealth and power of a Great Nation to be truly and substantially express and represented by *scraps of paper*; which are so far from being property, or the true signs of property, that they signify nothing truly, but imposture on one hand, and credulity on the other. they may be annihilated by an opinion, a report, a dream. the dream of presumption in Government, of delusion in the people. a Gang of Scotch Jacobite Raggamuffins striding bare-a—'d to the *Sooth*, have more than once shaken it. the small *bubble of Ayr*, that Caledonian *Frog*, swelling to ape the English *Ox*, has thrown it into violent agitation. But while we ridicule the mysteries of Faith, we have an implicit confidence in the
bubbles

bubbles of State. and yet I can not see a greater absurdity in supposing one man to eat his God, than another to carry about him a *Thousand Acres* of Land, or to put a Great House, or an Equipage into his Pocket-book; which is done every day in this metropolis, with the greatest self-complacence, and security. And altho' we should be ready to laugh at the sly Priest, who putting the Wafer into our mouths, cry's, *hoc est corpus*; yet we have no suspicion of the State Juggler, who putting some flimsy bits of paper into our hands, tells us one is a freehold estate, a second a manor, a third a town house, and a fourth a fat ox, or a pipe of wine. This gross bubble, practised every hour even upon the infidelity of Avarice itself, rather exceeds than falls short of the spiritual one; because the objects it converses with are
merely

merely sensible, and more open to detection. So that when we see a wise and philosophical Nation hugging phantoms for realities. running mad in schemes of refinement, taste, pleasure, wealth, power and greatness, by the sole aid of this Civil *hocus pocus*; when we contemplate paper gold, and paper land, paper fleets, armies, and revenues; a paper Government, and a *Supreme paper Legislature*; we are apt to regard the Fairy Tales, the Travels of Gulliver, and the Arabian Nights Entertainments, as grave relations, and historical facts. We are really the true Enchanted Island. I begin to suspect the Thames before my eyes, to be no better than a theatrical river, made of paper or tinsel. and I have frequently my doubts, from the strong propensity I find to paper, whether I am myself of any better materials. We have carried
the

BOOKS (31)
the Paper Manufactory to a great
height indeed, when our very houses
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mark its frivolity, is the *Paper Age*.

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